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FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3435
INFO RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 4589
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RHMFTT/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHHJJAA/JICPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 0016
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY PRIORITY 0607
RUEHSV/AMEMBASSY SUVA 0527

C O N F I D E N T I A L WELLINGTON 000851

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STATE PASS TO EAP/ANP

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SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND'S REACTION TO POLITICAL TENSIONS IN FIJI

Classified by DCM David J. Keegan. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) In discussions November 1 regarding political tensions in Fiji with Heather Riddell, Director of Pacific Division at Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), Post learned that GNZ will shortly be issuing a formal statement declaring that Fiji's military commander Bainimarama is obliged to abide by his constitutional obligations to the democratically elected government of Fiji.

¶2. (C) The Chief of New Zealand's Defense Force will also be calling Bainimarama directly and exhorting him not to take any action which would undermine the Fijian constitution. The New Zealand High Commissioner in Suva will also be calling on Fiji's Vice President to express support for the government and relay the warning they have expressed to Commander Bainimarama. MFAT is reviewing their travel advisory for New Zealanders in Fiji to take into account possible emergency action procedures.

¶3. (C) New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters separately told the Ambassador that the New Zealand Government had concluded that many Fijians shared Bainimarama's frustration with the amnesty for those involved in the previous coup. Nonetheless, his actions were completely contrary to acceptable democratic practice and must be stopped. GNZ had decided that the Chief of Defense Force would be the one to call Bainimarama because he would be far more likely to listen seriously to a military colleague than a foreign government official. Peters added that New Zealand and Australia are absolutely of one mind in their approach to Fiji.

McCormick